Howkins, A. (2019). Review of John V.H. Dippel, To the Ends of the Earth: The Truth Behind the Glory of Polar Exploration. *ISIS*, *110*(3), 613-614.

Both Creationism and polygenesis declined, but racism was reinvented and intensified. It defended the forced labor of non-Europeans, and the practice of discrimination and segregation in colonial and dominion regimes. On the other hand, there were new signs of resistance. The Universal Races Congress of 1912 rejected papers from A. C. Haddon and other anthropologists because their discipline failed to meet the organizers' ethical test of human equality. In 1910, Sir Harry Johnston, a colonial administrator and a member of the Anthropological Institute, warned of the "Rise of the Native" in the form of a colonial bourgeoisie of color. Colonial nationalism would only grow in strength when war forced changes in the science and politics of empire.

**Douglas A. Lorimer**

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**John V. H. Dippel.** *To the Ends of the Earth: The Truth behind the Glory of Polar Exploration*. 343 pp., notes, index. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2018. $28 (cloth). ISBN 9781633884113.

There is a long-running debate in the historiography of polar exploration about the value of the science conducted by the expeditions that headed to the Arctic and Antarctica in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the one side, books like Edward Larsen's *An Empire of Ice: Scott, Shackleton, and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Science* (2011) take seriously the science conducted by the British expeditions that sailed to Antarctica in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Taking the opposing view, numerous authors have focused on acts of heroism and national glory, largely dismissing the value of the research that was conducted. John V. H. Dippel, in *To the Ends of the Earth*, falls squarely into the latter category, paying little attention to the scientific work of polar expeditions and focusing instead on the personal ambitions that motivated polar exploration. According to Dippel, the "truth" behind the "glory" of polar exploration lay in the base motivations—and often the incompetence—of the leaders, rather than in any genuine desire to explore the unknown and expand the frontiers of science.

Dippel largely achieves what he sets out to do. Although the book doesn't add much new material to polar scholarship, it is generally well written, and there are enough interesting insights into the lives of polar explorers and their expeditions to keep readers turning the pages. It is let down a little by its structure, which is neither chronological nor fully thematic, meaning that the text jumps around from one expedition to another, and from the Arctic to Antarctica. It is not uncommon to find Sir John Franklin searching for the Northwest Passage in the 1840s in one paragraph and Robert Scott at the South Pole in 1912 in the next (e.g., p. 160). While there were certainly similarities between the exploration of the Far North and the Far South, there were also important differences. In the structure adopted by Dippel, all polar expeditions blur together, and there is little room for development over time. This could be confusing for a reader unfamiliar with the history of polar exploration and is certainly frustrating for anyone looking for insights into the interconnections of the different expeditions. The lack of a chronological approach also means the narrative can be quite repetitive: I lost track, for example, of the number of times the story of Apsley Cherry Garrard's midwinter quest for emperor penguin eggs is repeated.

Any book with a chapter titled "Dog Eat Dog, Man Eat Dog, Man Eat Man" might be accused of sensationalizing its subject matter. While this might be a little unfair to Dippel, he does tend toward a slightly one-dimensional portrayal of many of his characters, especially when this fits into his overarching narrative of personal ambition and incompetence. The Captain Scott we are presented with, for example, comes largely from the Roland Huntford school of a bumbling and often quite nasty leader. While

Huntford's work at the time served as a necessary corrective to an overly hagiographical literature, the reality of Scott's personality lies in a complex middle ground, which Dippel seems to have little time for. The accusations of cannibalism leveled at Douglas Mawson may be true but are completely speculative. There is something a little disingenuous about a book that purports to tell the truth about polar exploration so cavalierly blurring the lines between what can and cannot be known about this history. Less importantly, it's a little unfair to call Ernest Shackleton a "landlubber" since his background was in the merchant navy (p. 111).

Historians of science will likely be disappointed by Dippel's treatment of polar research over the long nineteenth century. In many parts of the book science is conspicuous by its absence. At one point he writes that Mawson is "respected as the only true scientist on the Antarctic continent during the age of Scott and Shackleton" (p. 177), seemingly overlooking the fact that Mawson was in Antarctica with his academic supervisor, the distinguished Australian geologist Edgeworth David. Such a statement also seems a little unfair to the scientific work of scientists like Otto Nordenskjöld, Jean-Baptiste Charcot, Henryk Arctowski, Frank Debenham, Raymond Priestley, Griffith Taylor, Charles Wright, James Murray, James Wordie, and a number of others who traveled south during this period and whose Antarctic research played an important role in the development of distinguished scientific careers. Downplaying the role of science, of course, is in keeping with Dippel's central argument that polar exploration was fundamentally about nationalism and the arrogance of the leaders. But one of the most disappointing things about the lack of a clear chronology is that an opportunity is lost to consider the development of scientific thinking in the polar regions over the more than 100-year period covered by this book.

Ultimately, there is nothing fundamentally incorrect about Dippel's argument that personal ambition and nationalism motivated polar exploration during this period. But such an argument can only go so far, and there were other interconnected motivations for exploring the Arctic and Antarctica during this period, including scientific research. Armchair explorers, or tourists heading off on a cruise ship to the Antarctic Peninsula, will find much to enjoy in this book; serious scholars of the polar regions may be a little disappointed.

**Adrian Howkins**

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**Myron Echenberg.** *Humboldt's Mexico: In the Footsteps of the Illustrious German Scientific Traveller*. li + 236, figs., map, tables, bibl., index. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017. $39.95 (cloth). ISBN 9780773549401.

Recent studies on Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) encompass a wide array of disciplines and scholarly fields: history of science and ideas, colonial history and postcolonial studies, history of aesthetics and travel writing, environmental studies and ecocriticism, among others. What we might call a recent renaissance of Humboldt scholarship and literary activities should not only be attributed to Andrea Wulf's successful biography *The Invention of Nature* (John Murray, 2015). It is the result of a two-decade-long effort starting with the bicentennial of the American travels (1799–1804), when a series of exhibits and conferences around the globe reminded the scientific and general public of the relevance of one of Europe's most eminent figures of the nineteenth century. These events set the stage for numerous research projects in Germany, Spain, Latin America, and the United States that were aimed at recovering the original Humboldtian text as a response to a history of reception in which Humboldt was largely read and commented upon based on highly abbreviated and at times falsely translated editions of his works. These editions, next to those published by the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities since the